<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier version and listings.

1.- 41. (canceled)


42.  (new):  A sticker printing apparatus for printing a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid on a display screen, comprising:

storage means which has previously stored a plurality of candidate images for each of parts which forms a sticker, where the parts are each to be overlaid on each other in a fixed order, where at least one of the parts is to be combined with a character string and one of the parts is a background part of the sticker;

parts determination means for determining, in a fixed order, one image for each of parts, by displaying a plurality of candidate images for a part to be determined on the screen and selecting one of displayed plurality of candidate images using the touch panel, and storing into a memory the selected candidate image as a determined part image corresponding to the part;

generating means for, whenever a part image of a part layer is determined by said parts determination means, generating image data of a sticker in an intermediate step performed by said part determination means by laying out part images, having been determined by said parts determination means, stored in the memory in accordance with the fixed order and with predetermined positions assigned to each of the part layers, and displaying the generated image data on a predetermined area on the screen;

edit means for, while said parts determination means and said generating means are operating, selecting a part to be edited in accordance with whether a user designates a previous part or a next part, and editing the selected part so as to re-select one of the plurality of candidate images of the selected part, where a plurality of parts are subjected to be edited; and

output means for, when an output instruction is inputted by using the touch panel, outputting the image data of the sticker, obtained by said generating means, to printing means,

wherein said parts determination means includes:

discrimination means for discriminating whether or not a part of interest is to be combined with a character string;

first storing means for, if said discrimination means discriminates that the part of interest is not to be combined with a character string, a selected candidate image as the determined part image for the part of interest into the memory;

input means for, if said discrimination means discriminates that the part of interest is to be combined with a character string, inputting a character string using the touch panel;

combining means for combining the selected candidate image with an image of the character string inputted by said input means; and

second storing means for storing the candidate image combined by said combining means as the determined part image for the part of interest into the memory.

43. (new): The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 42, wherein said input means comprises:

means for displaying predetermined sample character strings on the display screen;

means for selecting a character string from the displayed sample character strings by using the touch panel;

means for setting the touch panel as character input means; and

means for displaying a virtual keyboard for character input operation when the touch panel is set as character input means.

44. (new): The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 43, wherein said input means comprises means for setting a character design.

45. (new): The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the sticker has a form corresponding to a senjafuda, the form consisting of a header (kashira), a main body, and an insertion portion (sashifuda), and

wherein said input means inputs respective character strings for the header (kashira), main body, and insertion portion (sashifuda).

46. (new): The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 45, wherein said printing means prints plural stickers on one sheet.

47.  (new):  (previously presented):  The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 46, further comprising setting means for setting whether or not to insert the insertion portion (sashifuda) into the form,

wherein, in a case where the setting means sets to insert the insertion portion (sashifuda) into the form, a part of the stickers in one sheet are printed with the insertion portion (sashifuda) inserted into the form.


48.  (new):  The sticker printing apparatus according to claim 42,  wherein the memory to which the determined part image are stored is managed so that the memory has a plurality of memory layers, and said part determination means, when a part image is determined, stores the determined part image into a corresponding memory layer of the plurality of memory layers of the memory,

said apparatus further comprising:

drawing means for selecting a memory layer among the plurality of memory layers at the timing defined in a predetermined schedule information and drawing a part image forming an animation in the selected memory layer in accordance with the predetermined schedule information; and

animation display means for displaying an animation by combining the parts stored in the plurality memory layers in accordance with schedule information,

wherein the display of the animation is executed at the timing period from that a sticker had been printed to that a user operates for printing another sticker.

49. (new): The sticker apparatus according to claim 48, wherein the plurality of memory layers includes a memory layer for storing audio data and the predetermined schedule information defines the timing of reproducing the audio data, and

wherein the animation display means reproduces the audio data during the animation in accordance with the schedule information.


50. (new): A control method of a sticker printing apparatus for printing a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid on a display screen, comprising:

a storing step of storing, in advance, a plurality of candidate images for each of parts which forms a sticker, where the parts are each to be overlaid on each other in a fixed order, and where at least one of the parts is to be combined with a character string and one of the parts is a background part of the sticker;

a parts determination step, of determining, in a fixed order, one image for each of parts, by displaying a plurality of candidate images for a part to be determined on the screen and selecting one of displayed the plurality of candidate images using the touch panel, and storing into a memory the selected candidate image as a determined part image corresponding to the part;

a generating step of, whenever a part image of a part layer is determined in said parts determination step, generating image data of a sticker in an intermediate step of said parts determination step by laying out part images, having been determined in said parts determination step, stored in the memory in accordance with the fixed order and with predetermined positions assigned to each of the part layers, and displaying the generated image data on a predetermined area on the screen;

an editing step of, during execution of said parts determination step and said generating step, selecting a part to be edited in accordance with whether a user designates a previous part or a next part, and editing the selected part so as to re-select one of the plurality of candidate images of the selected part, where a plurality of parts are subjected to editing; and

an output step of, when an output instruction is inputted by using the touch panel, outputting the image data of the sticker, obtained in said generating step, to a printing unit,

wherein said parts determination step includes:

discriminating whether or not a part of interest is to be combined with a character string;

if it is discriminated in said discrimination step that the part of interest is not to be combined with a character string, storing a selected candidate image is stored as the determined part image for the part of interest into a memory;

if it is discriminated in said discrimination step that the part of interest is to be combined with a character string, inputting a character string using the touch panel;

combining the selected candidate image with an image of the character string inputted in said inputting step; and

storing the candidate image combined in said combining step as the determined part image for the part of interest into the memory.

51.  (new):  A computer-readable medium storing program codes to serve as a sticker printing apparatus, which prints a desired sticker by operating a touch panel overlaid on a display screen, said program codes having functions including:

storage means which has previously stored a plurality of candidate images for each of parts which forms a sticker, where the parts are each to be overlaid on each other in a fixed order, and where at least one of the parts is to be combined with a character string and one of the parts is a background part of the sticker;

parts determination means for determining, in a fixed order, one image for each of the parts, by displaying a plurality of candidate images for a part to be determined on the screen and selecting one of displayed candidate images using the touch panel, and storing into a memory the selected candidate image as a determined part image corresponding to the part;

generating means for, whenever a part image of a part layer is determined by said parts determination means, generating image data of a sticker in an intermediate step performed by said part determination means by laying out part images, determined by said parts determination means, stored in the memory in accordance with the fixed order and with predetermined positions assigned to each of the part layers, and displaying the generated image data on a predetermined area on the screen;

edit means for, while said parts determination means and said generating means are operating, selecting a part to be edited in accordance with whether a user designates a previous part or a next part, and editing the selected part so as to re-select one of the plurality of candidate images of the selected part, where a plurality of parts are subjected to editing; and

output means for, when an output instruction is inputted by using the touch panel, outputting the image data of the sticker, obtained by said generating means, to printing means,

wherein said parts determination means include:

discrimination means for discriminating whether or not a part of interest is to be combined with a character string;

first storing means for, if said discrimination means discriminates that the part of interest is not to be combined with a character string, a selected candidate image as the determined part image for the part of interest into the memory;

input means for, if said discrimination means discriminates that the part of interest is to be combined with a character string, inputting a character string using the touch panel;

combining means for combining the selected candidate image with an image of the character string inputted by said input means; and

second storing means for storing the candidate image combined by said combining means as the determined part image for the part of interest into said memory.